

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 /065 W

----- 024565

R 271610Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6416

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PING, GR

SUBJ: KING CONSTANTINE PLEDGES RESPECT FOR DEMOCRATIC
INSTITUTIONS

REF: FBIS 262137Z NOV 74

1. SUMMARY: IN TEN-MINUTE ADDRESS BROADCAST OVER NATIONAL TV FROM LONDON VIDEO-TAPE, KING CONSTANTINE RECALLED HIS PERSONAL STRUGGLE AGAINST DICTATORSHIP AND NATIONAL POLITICAL MISTAKES IN PAST, PLEDGED HIS SUBMISSION TO POPULAR WILL AND HIS RESPECT FOR POLITICAL RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS INCLUDING "DEMOCRATIC CONCEPT OF MONARCHY" AND APPEALED FOR COMMON STRUGGLE FOR GOOD OF COUNTRY TO WHICH HE DEDICATED HIS SERVICE. KING ADDED THAT ARMED FORCES SHOULD NEVER INTERFERE IN POLITICS. PUBLIC REACTION NOT SURPRISINGLY WAS MIXED, BUT ON BALANCE KING PROBABLY IMPROVED HIS SUPPORT IN DECEMBER 8 REFERENDUM. END SUMMARY.

2. HIGHLIGHTS OF SPEECH (FULL TEXT FBIS 262137Z NOV. 74) WHICH WAS DELIVERED IN CONFIDENT, SOLEMN MANNER DESPITE KING'S SLIGHTLY DAZED LOOK FROM CONTACT LENSES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

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--SPEAKING FROM FOREIGN LAND AND HONORING NATIONAL

STRUGGLE FOR RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, KING
VIEWED POSITIVELY NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION;
--AFTER EFFORTS TO RID COUNTRY OF DICTATORSHIP, KING
LEFT GREECE BUT CONTINUED STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL LIBE
RATION
OF NATION;
--AUTOCRATIC REGIME WAS IMPOSED BY SMALL GROUP OF
PEOPLE, NOT ARMED FORCES. ARMED FORCES SHOULD BE DEVOTED
TO TASK OF DEFENDING NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND NEVER
INTEREFERE IN POLITICS;
--ALTHOUGH IT WAS NATURAL FOR KING TO RETURN TO
FATHERLAND AFTER COLLAPSE OF DICTATORIAL REGIME, "SPECIAL
CIRCUMSTANCES" IMPOSED EXTENSION OF EXILE;
--KING OPPOSED ILLEGAL CHANGE OF REGIME BY
DICTATORSHIP AND STATED AT THAT TIME HE WOULD SUBMIT TO
JUDGMENT OF PEOPLE IN FREE VOTING;
--MANY ERRORS HAVE BEEN COMMITTED IN PAST WHICH
WEAKENED DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE--SUCH MISTAKES SHOULD BE
PREVENTED IN FUTURE. "WE NEED CONSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY
OF ESTABLISHED EFFICIENCY TO RENDER IMPOSSIBLE IN FUTURE
ANY ATTEMPT OF DEVIATION OR IRREGULARITYNEW
CONSTITUTION PROVIDES UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR ORGANIZING
MODERN, PROGRESSIVE AND DEMOCRATIC MACHINERY GOVERNING
STATE POLITICS AND REGIME,"
--ABSOLUTE RESPECT OF POPULAR AUTHORITY AND
DEMOCRATIC FREEDOM IS MATTER OF PRINCIPLE TO KING.
"ALL PEOPLE AND POLITICAL PARTIES SHOULD REST ASSURED
THAT KING WILL SET AN EXAMPLE ON HOW THEIR POLITICAL
RIGHTS SHOULD BE RESPECTED;"
--"I DEDICATE MYSELF TO SERVICE OF GREECE....IT IS
BOTH MY COUNTRY AND MY HOMELAND. THE COUNTRY AND HOMELAND
OF MY CHILDREN AND LAND OF GRAVES OF MY FATHER AND
FOREBEARS."

3. ATHENS PRESS COVERED SPEECH WITH BANNER HEADLINES
"I SHALL DEVOTE MY LIFE TO PROTECTING DEMOCRACY,"
"CONSTANTINE PROMISED YESTERDAY A DEMOCRATIC AND MODERN
KINGDOM," "THE CULPABLE MONARCH ATTEMPTS TO DECEIVE
GREEK PEOPLE," AND "LET US MARCH AHEAD IN GREAT STRUGGLE
TO CRUSH MONARCHY;" IN KATHIMERINI, AKROPOLIS, RIZOSPASTIS,
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AND AVGHI RESPECTIVELY. ONLY TO VIMA COMMENTED ON SPEECH
NOTING THAT KING'S RECORD INDICATES HE DID NOT ENGAGE IN
RESISTANCE STRUGGLE AND THAT HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND
DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. ALL NEWSPAPERS CARRIED PHOTOS OF
ROYAL FAMILY INCLUDING AVGHI DISPLAY OF QUEEN FREDERIKA
IN UNIFORM OF HITLER JUGEND. MONARCHIST ELLINIKON MELLON
COMPLAINED THAT ANTI-ROYALISTS ARE CURCIUATING LEAFLET
WITH PHOTO OF QUEEN FREDERIKA WITH CAPTION "I AM COMING."

(ONE ANTI-ROYALIST LEAFLET CIRCULATED AT POLYTECHNION DEMONSTRATION NOVEMBER 24 SHOWED KING IN CENTER OF GROUP PHOTOGRAPH PRESUMABLY TAKEN LATE APRIL 1967 IN WHICH PAPADOPOULOS, PATTAKOS, ZOITAKIS AND OTHER JUNTA ASSOCIATES ALSO APPEARED.) WHILE PUBLIC REACTION TO SPEECH HAS BEEN DIVIDED ALONG TRADITIONAL LINES OF MONARCHIST/REPUBLICAN FORCES, MANY FEEL KING'S SINCERITY AND STRAIGHTFORWARD APPEAL BOLSTERED HIS POSITION. KING'S STRESS ON SUBMITTING TO POPULAR WILL AND RESPECTING RULES OF NEW POLITICS IN GREECE ALSO MAY HAVE HELPED HIS STANDING. GIVEN PROMINENCE OF MONARCHY/REPUBLIC QUESTION IN CONTEMPORARY GREEK POLITICS, THERE IS SURPRISINGLY HIGH PERCENTAGE OF ELECTORATE WHO CLAIM TO BE UNDECIDED, WHICH COULD HAVE IMPORTANT EFFECT ON OUTCOME OF DECEMBER 8 REFERENDUM. WIDELY HELD VIEW IS THAT COMBINED ANTI-ROYALIST STAND OF CU/NF, PAOK AND LEFTISTS PLUS AT LEAST ONE-THIRD OF NEW DEMOCRACY SUPPORT COULD PERMIT KING TO RECEIVE MAXIMUM 40-45 PERCENT OF VOTE. OTHERS HOLD THAT KING WILL GARNER HIGH RETURNS IN NEARLY ALL PROVINCES TO COMPENSATE FOR RELATIVELY LOWER BALLOTING STRENGTH IN URBAN AND TRADITIONALLY ANTI-ROYALIST AREAS AND MIGHT SCRAPE OUT BARE MAJORITY. MOST OBSERVERS PREFER TO WITHHOLD JUDGMENT UNTIL "CAMPAIGN" DEVELOPS AND MORE DIRECT ASSESSMENT OF VOTER PREFERENCE CAN BE MADE IN THIS LIGHT.

4. NEXT EVENT IS RADIO/TV ADDRESS OF CU/NF LEADER, GEORGE MAVROS, WHO IS SCHEDULED TO SPEAK NOVEMBER 27 IN OPPOSITION TO REESTABLISHMENT OF MONARCHY. ATHENS PRESS REPORTED THAT FACT MAVROS WOULD SPEAK FOR REPUBLIC INDICATED BREAK WITH CARAMANLIS WHO REQUESTED POLITICAL LEADERS TO APPROACH REFERENDUM AS NON-PARTISAN QUESTION. TWO MORE TELEVISION APPEARANCES, WHICH WILL BE DIVIDED EQUALLY BETWEEN BOTH SIDES, ARE SCHEDULED THIS WEEK AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOUR NEXT WEEK. UNDER SECRETARY LAMBRIAS IS CHARGED WITH RESPONSIBILITY OF SELECTING SPEAKERS WHICH REPORTEDLY MAY INCLUDE PASOK REPRESENTATIVE, PERHAPS ANDREAS PAPANDREOU, AGAINST MONARCHY, WITH THOSE IN FAVOR TO INCLUDE G. KOUROUKLIS, LEADER OF ROYAL UNION, RETIRED GENERAL G. TZANETIS, A PROMINENT ROYALIST, AND MRS. A. VOURLOUMIS, WHO WAS PUBLIC RELATIONS COUNSELOR TO ROYAL FAMILY BEFORE 1967. KUBISCH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ATHENS08498
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740346-0352
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974119/aaaaahka.tel
Line Count: 163
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: FBIS 262137Z NOV 74
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <17 MAR 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KING CONSTANTINE PLEDGES RESPECT FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, GR, (CONSTANTINE, KING)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005